IZN

INTERNATIONAL ZOO NEWS

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Contributions
The editor welcomes contributions, which should be typed, double spaced, on one side of the paper only, and with generous margins. Contributions should be accompanied by black and white photographs, line drawings, and tables where appropriate. For feature articles, the editor should be queried in advance in case a similar article has already been accepted.

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CONTENTS

International Zoo News No 199, Vol 33/5-6 **Sept/Dec 1986**

EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Breeding Endangered Species 3
Sanford Friedman

FEATURE ARTICLES

Breeding the Black Rhinoceros in Great Britain 10
Martin Banks

A Study of Przewalski Horses at Topeka Zoo, USA 16
Lee Boyd

Breeding the Tahiti Blue Lory 20
Rosemary Low

Notes on Rearing Chinese Pangolins 32
Vicki Lyn Bridge and Lin Ming-Sheung

Managing a Colony of Victorian Koala at the Los Angeles Zoo, USA 34
Don Richardson

Book Reviews 47
Surplus and Wanted Stock 49
Annual Reports 50
Miscellany 55
Conservation 57
International Zoo News 64

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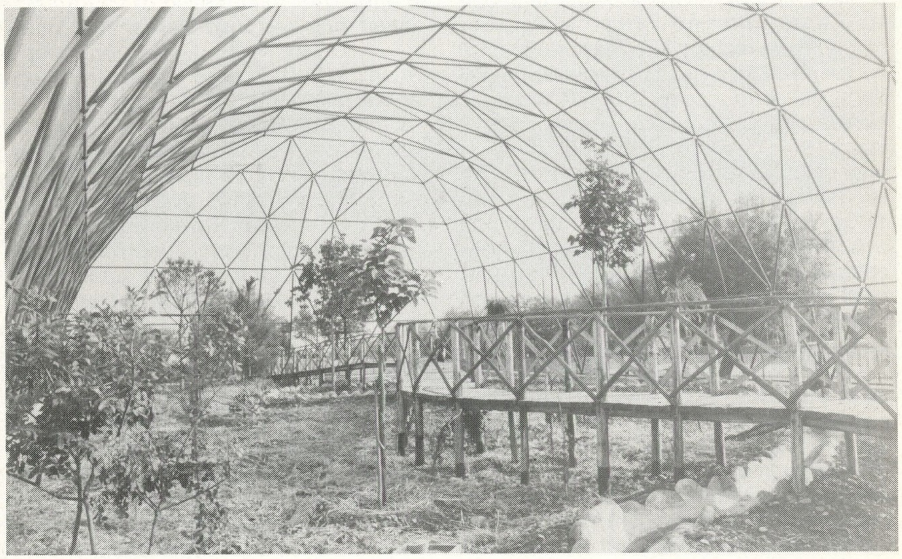
Catania), at the foot of the volcano Mount Etna, about 15km from Catania (second largest city in Sicily, 400,000 inhabitants), 75km from Syracuse (125,000 inhabitants), 100km from Messina (275,000 inhabitants), 60km from Taormina (important tourist centre), and at the centre of a densely populated area with many minor cities and villages. At present the zoo exhibits 280 mammals of 75 species and about 350 birds of 60 species. The spacious enclosures are located partly among olive trees and partly among ornamental trees. The cages for large carnivores are broad, modern and suitably furnished. Nearly all the traditional zoo animals are represented; worthy of mention being a beautiful pair of black jaguars, a pair of European lynx, a 50-year-old Asiatic elephant cow (which belonged to a large circus and was destined to be put down because she was no longer transportable) and a male white rhinoceros.

A 2.5 hectare artificial lake with an island in the middle has been excavated which is surrounded by low hills on which many trees will be planted, and it is fed by a natural spring whose water is used afterwards for the zoo and the farm. It will be ready next year and will be populated by numerous waterfowl. In the meantime, the lake has been discovered by wild migratory birds who find in it a safe refuge from the guns of hunters.

The mild climate of Sicily and the natural environment contribute to the welfare of the animals: many species have already bred. For the time being the "Zoo Park of Siciliy" keeps only traditional fauna, but it is hoped that in the future, as the financial situation improves (no contributions of any kind have been received so far) and the owners and staff gain experience, rare and endangered species will also be kept. They should soon acclimatise and prosper in the Mediterranean climate, and produce numerous progeny.

The zoo already cooperates with the Delegation of WWF-Italy in Catania: for the moment it is also a centre for the rehabilitation of birds of prey wounded by hunters (in spite of their protection by law). The aim is to institute a programme in collaboration with WWF for the establishment of a centre for the reproduction and return to the wild of endangered species of Sicilian fauna.

A Reptile House is foreseen in the future, but only when the zoo will be able to afford a very modern house with the best artificial/natural habitats in large terraria and the best technologies for temperature and humidity controls.



Parco Zoo di Sicilia, walk-through aviary for wildfowl (under construction)

Address of "Sicily's First Zoo":
"Parco Zoo di Sicilia"
Superstrada Catania-Paternò
I—95032 BELPASSO (Catania), Italy
Tel. 095-918057

Owner/Director: Dr Giuseppe Russello

Note: Any Zoo director or zoo-man on holiday in Sicily or passing through, who wants to visit the zoo in Belpasso/Catania, will be a welcome guest. His/her opinion and advice will be appreciated.

Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia

In a joint Taronga Zoo/Royal Australian Navy conservation project, four green sea turtles and one loggerhead turtle have been released in the waters off the Great Barrier Reef.

The green sea turtles, protected in Australia, were illegally captured by tourists and brought south to Sydney. The hatchlings soon outgrew their tank and were anonymously donated to Taronga Zoo. After twelve months of care and attention at the Zoo the turtles were ready to be released.

The turtles left Sydney aboard the Cairns-based patrol boat HMAS 'Townsville' to be released in the warm waters off the Great Barrier Reef, north of Townsville.

Two red pandas, both female, were born in December 1985 and have spent the first months of their lives quietly resting in their nest boxes.

Because the mother, Mei-Sing, was neglecting one of the babies, possibly because it was considerably undersized, Kim-Su, was placed in the Zoo's Animal Nursery for special care and handrearing by Nursery Keepers. Since then she has put on weight and is progressing well. Her sister, Pitti-Sing, is strong and healthy and will play a major role in the worldwide red panda breeding programme.

Whipsnade Park, Bedfordshire, UK

At Whipsnade Park there were 465 registered additions of mammals, birds and reptiles during the period June-September 1986.

Mammals: Births totalled 249 and included 2 sitatunga, 1 barasingha, 2 mouflon, 3 Persian onagers, 2 cream ponies, 2 yak, 4 hog deer, 8 fallow deer, 4 axis deer, 15 Formosan deer, 19 nilgai, 2 European bison, 2 white and 1 Indian rhinoceros, 3 jaguars, 5 cheetahs, 2 squirrel monkeys and 2 mara. Bred in the Park during 1986 were 9 grey wolves, 111 Bennett's wallabies (11 of which were the white variety) and 50 Chinese water deer.

Other arrivals included 4 common marmosets from the Institute of Zoology, 3 ankole cattle, 5 blackbuck and 1 cheetah deposited by Marwell. From Regent's Park came 2 fennec foxes, 1 desert hedgehog and 2 Californian sealions. 2 roan antelope were also received—1 deposited by Marwell and 1 from Regent's Park.

Birds: Hatchings totalled 140 including 3 red-crested pochard, 1 common shelduck, 9 Humboldt's penguin, 2 king penguin, 1 white-naped crane, 5 rosy flamingo and six species of geese: 4 Egyptian, 4 bar-headed, 5 lesser snow, 1 greater snow, 4 emperor and 11 barnacle. Hatched in the Park during 1986 were 5 eider duck, 5 blue eared pheasant, 30 red jungle fowl and 50 common peafowl.

Arrivals from other sources were 2 Ruppells griffon vulture from Twycross, 3 little owl, 2 snowy owl and 1 ariel toucan from Regent's Park.

Reptiles: There were 13 hatchings—all spur-thighed tortoises.

Remaining arrivals were 1 Hermann's tortoise, presented by a member of the public, 6 starred agama, 4 Schneider's skink, 6 sandfish, 3 Theban sand boa—all purchased. From Jersey Zoo came 3 Jamaican boa on deposit and 6 plumed basilisk presented. Received from Regent's Park were 5 leopard ground gecko and 1 moila snake.

Saturday 24th May 1986 saw the start of the fabulous Birds of Prey Flying Dis-

plays at Whipsnade Park. Nine birds including eagles, falcons, hawks and owls were giving 30-minute free-flying demonstrations, three times a day, every day until 30th September (except Fridays when the birds rest). The displays can be seen on the lawn next to the Dolphinarium and were presented by Adrian Walker of the Falconry Centre, Newent, Gloucestershire.

During the displays birds are flown individually, returning to their trainer to be rewarded with a tasty piece of meat. With some birds this is held in a gloved hand, but with the falcons it is attached to a feathery 'lure', a device which is whirled around on the end of a line for the birds to catch. The lure is used for the falcons because of the high speeds they can attain during their dives or stoops—in some cases up to 150 mph from over 1,000 feet.

Among the birds chosen were two that until recently were housed at London Zoo. These are Sarah, a 17-year-old steppe eagle with an impressive 2 metre wingspan and Santiago, a grey eagle-buzzard.

Zurich Zoological Garden, Switzerland

Births and hatchings during the period July to September 1986 include the following: 2.1 aperea, 1.2 capybara, 3.1 European otter, 1.1 striped hyena, 1.0 snow leopard, 0.1 harbour seal (first rearing), 1.0 alpaca, 1.0 vicuna, 1.0 lesser Malayan mousedeer, 1.1 nilgai, 1.1 greater kudu, 1.0 Arabian oryx (20th young born since 1980), 1.3 blackbuck, 2 cormorant, 1 boatbill, 2 scarlet ibis, 2.1 red-breasted goose, 5.2 falcated teal, 0.2 Falkland Island steamer duck, 4.1 mandarin duck, 4.4 Carolina wood duck, 4 alpine rock partridge, 3 rouroul, 10 vulturine guineafowl, 7 blue peafowl, 4 Tasmanian waterhen, 1 nicobar pigeon, 12 rock pigeon, 3 crested pigeon, 2 hill mynah, 11 South American red-eared turtle, 16 leopard gecko, 7 ball python.

The most important arrivals include: 2.0 ring-tailed lemur (=4.4), 0.2 gelada (donated by Adelaide Zoo; =2.10), 0.1 talapoin (=1.7), 1.1 corsac (donated by Heidelberg Zoo), 0.1 Polar bear (=1.2), 1.1 spectacled bear (loaned by Brookfield, Jersey and Whipsnade Zoos), 0.1 lesser panda (=0.2), 0.1 Indian elephant (on breeding loan from Wilhelma, Stuttgart), 2.5 European spoonbill, 3.0 Lilford's crane (donated by Copenhagen Zoo; =5.4), 2.1 East African crowned crane (=5.4), 2.2 green-winged teal, 0.1 Sclater's crowned pigeon (on breeding loan from Animal Park Berne =1.1), 1.1 Pesquet's parrot (donated by Zoological Museum of the University of Zurich), 1.0 European pygmy owl (=1.1), 1.1 Ural owl, 22 Coral fish in different species.



Indian rhino and calf at Whipsnade.

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